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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. AMODEI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 10, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK AMODEI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

END THE SEQUESTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, beginning this week, literally hundreds of thousands of civilian workers are being furloughed at defense installations in Maryland's Fifth District, across the State, and around the country. That means as of Monday, more than 650,000 hardworking, middle class defense employees are being forced to take a 20 percent pay cut for the remainder of the fiscal year.

It isn't because they are not doing their job well; they are.

It isn't because they don't have enough work; they do.

And it isn't because we don't need their talents, their experience, and their dedication to service; we need them more now than ever.

These employees are being furloughed because Congress has failed. Congress has failed to achieve deficit reduction in a balanced and responsible way. In fact, we passed a budget through the House of Representatives; the United States Senate has passed a budget. But the House of Representatives, Republican leadership, refuses to go to conference, refuses to follow regular order for which they've called so frequently, refuses to try to bring a compromise agreement back to this floor. This Congress has failed to achieve deficit reduction in a balanced and responsible way.

Instead, we now have the sequester—a senseless, stupid, irrational policy. It's a real shame, Mr. Speaker, that partisan politics is keeping some of our country's best and brightest from doing their jobs supporting our warfighters as they serve in Afghanistan and around the world.

Last Tuesday, I met with some of the outstanding men and women who work in civilian defense jobs at Pax River Naval Air Station in my district. When you go to Pax River, you often see uniformed and civilian personnel sitting side by side, working to accomplish the same mission, serving with the same dedication, partners in making our government stronger and making our defense stronger, each complementing the work of the other.

Now, as a result of these furloughs, one of them will get a 20 percent pay cut. One of them will be told to go home. One of them will be told you can't even volunteer to come back and get the job done. And the other will get one day a week of having to carry out the mission alone.

At that meeting, I heard from members of the Pax River community who

are deeply concerned about the effects of these furloughs on our military readiness, our ongoing missions, on Department morale, and on the local economy. They were concerned about themselves, but they were mainly concerned about the job that was going to be left undone, finished late, undermining our security. One person scheduled to be furloughed this Friday told me:

I have a strong work ethic, and I want to get the job done, whether it's late nights and weekends. And I'm worried someone will come to me on a Thursday and I'll have to say, I can't get the job done until Monday.

Because, Mr. Speaker, we are telling that person you can't come to work.

Another employee who was there last Tuesday emailed me afterward about the upcoming furlough writing:

There are many people in this organization who stretch themselves day after day, happily, to get the work done that needs to get done to support the Department of Defense and the warfighter.

I will tell you, and so many Members on both sides of the aisle have met these folks, not these specific folks perhaps at Pax, but around this country who are dedicated, patriotic, hardworking, and want to make sure that their country is strong and that we serve our people.

This one constituent continues:

"I've already started to see some of these same people giving less of themselves because they feel our Congressmen," that's meaning all of us, "and our country no longer put value in what they do."

We are undermining the morale of the American workers. We are undermining the ability of the American Government to be as effective with respect to national defense as it needs to be.

Mr. Speaker, this sequester is harming morale and may lead skilled employees to leave for the private sector just when we need them most.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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